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BOROUGH OF LEOMINSTER
HEREFORDSHIRE



ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

State of the Public Health

For the Year 1944

Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health	H. F. GREEN, M.A., M.B., D.P.H. (On War Service from 17/7/42)
Acting Medical Officer of Health (Deputy County Medical Officer)	I. F. MACKENZIE, M.D. (Edin.), D.P.H., D.T.M. & H. (Private Tel., Weobley 59)
Clerk	B. J. SCANDRETT (On War Service from 1939)
Temporary Clerk	MISS D. M. J. BRAMFITT.
Sanitary Inspector	A. S. SMITH, M.S.I.A., C.R. San. I., Cert. Meat and other Foods. Cert. C.I.S. (Tel., Leom. 257).
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To the Chairman and Members of the Leominster Borough Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS,

I present herewith the Annual Report for 1944.

On the whole the health of the community has continued to be good throughout the year.

A table showing the increase in the incidence of Tuberculosis since the year 1939 has been prepared. It is well known that this disease consistently extends its grip on populations which are subjected to conditions (such as arise in war-time) involving physical strain and dietary deficiency; or where housing conditions are bad or overcrowding prevalent. The importance of milk as the vehicle by which Bovine Tuberculosis is conveyed to the human (producing mainly the non-pulmonary forms of the disease) should be borne in mind. It is unfortunately probable that a still further rise during 1945 in the occurrence of Tuberculosis will be reported in due course.

Your attention is drawn to the paragraph on Venereal Diseases.

I have pleasure in once more placing on record the high standard maintained by your Sanitary Inspector in the execution of his varied duties.

I am, your obedient Servant,

I. F. MACKENZIE,
Acting Medical Officer of Health.

June, 1945.

SECTION A. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA:

Area (in Acres)	8728
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1944) according to Rate Books	1660
Rateable Value	£33,905
Sum represented by a penny rate	£138

EXTRACT FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR:

BIRTH RATE (per 1,000 of estimated resident population)	20.8
STILLBIRTH RATE (per 1,000 Live and Still births)	0.0
DEATH RATE (per 1,000 of estimated resident population)	12.3
INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE (per 1,000 live births)	33.3
DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES: There were no deaths from Puerperal infection nor from other Puerperal causes in 1944.	

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1944:—

Birth Rate	17.6
Still Birth Rate	30.0
Death Rate	11.6
Infantile Mortality Rate	46.0

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA:

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Laboratory facilities continued to be available at the County Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, which, for the duration of the war, is under the administration of the Medical Research Council.

CLINICS.

There are none provided by the Authority.

Under County Council Schemes there were two Clinics operated within the Leominster Borough:—

(a) A Tuberculosis Dispensary was held monthly in the Cottage Hospital Annexe. This Tuberculosis follow-up Clinic has been discontinued in the interests of the patients, as many of them require radiological examination, which can only be provided in Hereford. The Clinic has therefore been transferred to the County Hospital, Hereford. Travel expenses incurred are repaid to the patients by the Herefordshire County Council.

(b) A Maternity and Child Welfare Centre which is conducted each Friday at 2 p.m. in the Mission Hall, Etnam Street.

The nearest Venereal Diseases Clinic is at the County Hospital, Hereford.

An Orthopædic After-Care Clinic, which is organised on a voluntary basis, is held in the Cottage Hospital Annexe.

GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME.

During the past five years your Sanitary Inspector has acted as Chief Billeting Officer. The work connected with billeting has proceeded smoothly throughout and all initial difficulties easily surmounted. Many children and members of priority classes have now returned to their home areas. The number remaining billeted at the end of the year was 160. Camp beds, bedding, clothing, etc., were issued in all necessitous cases. Great contributions have been made by foster parents, householders and voluntary workers.

I am indebted to Mr. A. S. Smith, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following Statement (Sections C to E) furnished under Article 27 (Sub-Section 18) of the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES AND INSPECTION.

WATER :

Chlorination of piped water supplies was continued during the year. For several weeks during the summer the usual gathering ground failed to provide the volume of water required and recourse was had to an emergency supply known as Midsummers Meadow well. The water in the Midsummers well, although polluted, was by chlorination rendered satisfactory for drinking purposes.

Samples taken and submitted for analysis :

(a) Piped Supplies (house taps and Waterworks Well)	...	101
(b) Wells	... ..	24
(c) Streams	... ..	9
(d) Wells cleansed or repaired	... ..	3

REMARKS : The following Out-Parish areas are not provided with town water : Brierley, Broadward and Elms Green, Cholstrey, Ebnal and Stagbatch, Ginhall Lane, Hyde Ash, Alden and Wintercott, Ivington, Newtown, Stretford and Hennor, Wharton and Marlbrook.

In general, the water supplies for houses in Out-Parish areas are private shallow wells, usually unlined and of a type subject to contamination. Many houses were without sufficient water during the summer, due to wells drying up.

Piped water supply exists in the Borough proper. Many houses still share stand pipes situated in common yards.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

HOUSE DRAINS.

New drains laid (old houses)	... ..	2
Cleansed, trapped or ventilated	... ..	36
Inspection chambers built (old houses)	... ..	2

BOROUGH PROPER.—Drainage of old houses is in the main poor, consisting usually of unjointed pipes, devoid of inspection chambers or ventilation shafts.

OUT-PARISH.

New houses by Septic Tanks.

Old houses—Generally to ditches (cesspools or septic tanks infrequent).

WATER CLOSETS.

Additional provided (old houses)	... ..	1
Conversions or renewals	... ..	5

BOROUGH PROPER.—Common usage of closets, usually by the occupants of two houses, prevails in many cases. A type of closet existing on a large scale is the old fashioned long hopper with a wooden surround which is subject to fouling.

OUT-PARISH.—Pail and privy closets predominate.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

No Borough Sewage works exists and the position in regard to sewage disposal is as indicated in previous reports.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

No complaints have been received in respect of rivers and streams during the year.

REFUSE DISPOSAL.

Tipping has been continued at the public tip with satisfactory results.

Collections in the Borough parish take place once or twice weekly according to locality. In the Out-Parish there is no public collection, though certain houses have the refuse removed by the Council for a yearly charge.

SANITARY INSPECTION—HOUSING

As mentioned consistently in previous Annual Reports, working-class housing conditions, in general, are atrocious—dilapidation, lack of amenities, bad arrangement, low and unhealthy sites. The building of 500 houses would only replace existing slums. A serious shortage of suitable houses exists, and overcrowding has never been abated or programmed for. The building of an additional 100 houses, making a programme of say 600 houses, would adjust a very unsatisfactory position.

A first year programme of post-war work has been tentatively agreed at seventy 3-bedroomed houses, and eighteen 2-bedroomed houses; the houses to be erected on what is known as the Gateway Lane site already acquired by the Council. Progress has also been made towards the acquisition of some 27 acres of land in a very desirable part of the Borough; whilst in the Out-Parish area of Ivington the acquisition of approximately 2 acres of land is envisaged.

TABLE SHOWING INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT DURING THE YEAR TOGETHER WITH THE ACTION TAKEN AND THE RESULTS

INSPECTIONS UNDER				No. of Inspections.	Informal Notices served	Statutory Notices served	Notices complied with
Housing (1936) Act	...	...	...	4	3	—	3
Housing (Public Health Acts)	...	...	...	331	144	17	133
Factories	...	...	...	15	6	—	4
Cowsheds and Dairies	...	...	...	107	36	—	36
Bakehouses	...	...	...	15	—	—	—
Food Premises	...	...	...	47	1	—	1
Slaughterhouse	...	...	...	1092	—	—	—
Schools	...	...	...	6	—	—	—
Water Supplies	...	...	...	134	3	—	3
Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	33	—	—	—
Miscellaneous Visits	...	...	...	17	2	—	2
Milk Samples	...	...	...	89	20	—	20
TOTALS	...	...	...	1890	215	17	202

Defects remedied 169

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.—None in the Borough.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—No outstanding developments.

TENTS AND CARAVANS.—Camping does not exist on a large scale—no sites registered.

BED BUGS.—Although many old houses are infested, only two cases were reported during the year.

DISINFECTION ON ACCOUNT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Premises fumigated 12

Mode of disinfection: Formalin lamps and liquid spraying. Small portable Sack Disinfector is available.

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

- (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health and Housing Acts ... 147
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ... 335
- Number of dwelling houses found not to be, in all respects, reasonably fit for human habitation ... 3

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR.

Proceedings under Public Health Act :—

1. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 17
2. Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :
 - (a) By Owners 15
 - (b) By Local Authority in default of Owners ... Nil

VAN DWELLINGS.—Nil.

SECTION E.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

1. MILK SUPPLY.

Routine Inspections of farms and dairies.

(a) Examination for bacterial content—Samples sent to County Laboratory.

(b) Examination for Tubercle Bacilli—None by Local Authority.

Three cowhouses have been brought up to modern standards and improvements effected at other premises.

2. FOOD PREMISES.

Routine Inspections from time to time. General standard of cleanliness is good.

3. MEAT.

MEAT INSPECTION (PUBLIC ABATTOIR).—Centralised slaughtering under the Ministry of Food scheme of control is in operation. Areas served are Leominster Borough, Leominster and Wigmore Rural District, Kington Urban and Rural Districts, and Weobley Rural District. Inspection is carried out by your Sanitary Inspector, who is a qualified Meat Inspector. This responsibility entails for him considerable additional evening and week-end work.

The undernoted were slaughtered and inspected during the year :—

BEASTS	PIGS	SHEEP	CALVES	TOTAL
1,155	140	9,629	53	10,977

Diseased Meat discovered and dealt with :—

ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS.

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whole Carcases condemned	67	4	100	19
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	330	11	170	1
Percentage affected with diseases other than Tuberculosis	34.4%	10.7%	2.8%	37.7%

TUBERCULOSIS ONLY.

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whole Carcases condemned	32	2	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	47	6	—	—
Percentage affected with Tuberculosis	6.9%	5.7%	—	—
Weight of diseased meat discovered and dealt with ...	lbs. 56,209	lbs. 829	lbs. 5,084	lbs. 1,239

The percentage figures show the proportion of food animals found diseased.

METHOD OF INSPECTION.—In accordance with Ministry of Health Memorandum 62 (Foods), with certain relaxations.

The Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, are well observed by all meat traders. No Meat Marketing Scheme under Part III. of the Regulations is in operation. Byelaws are in force respecting slaughterhouses.

4. OTHER FOODS.

The undernoted foods were surrendered during the year :—

Canned goods and packages, 2,313 cans and packets; cheese, 22 lbs.;

fish, 5 stones; sugar, 73 lbs.; fats, 2 lbs.; fruit, 17 lbs.; cereals, 5 cwts. 8½ lbs.; bacon, 18 lbs.; sausages, 30 lbs.; jam, 129 lbs.; pressed meat, 24 lbs.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

With the exception of measles and whooping cough, the incidence of notifiable disease within the Borough was low during the whole of 1944. Sporadic cases only of the other infectious diseases occurred. As Influenza is not a notifiable condition no statistical evidence is available of the extent to which residents in Leominster were affected by this complaint.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE DURING THE YEAR.

	Total Cases Notified.	Cases Admitted to Hospital.
Measles	64	Nil
Whooping Cough	56	Nil
Scarlet Fever	9	3
Pneumonia (Primary & Influenzal)	2	Nil
Erysipelas	4	Nil
Dysentery	9	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	1
Diphtheria	5	5
Food Poisoning	1	Nil
Cerebro Spinal Fever	1	1

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL NOTIFIED CASES, ACCORDING TO AGE :

DISEASE.	AGE OF PATIENT.															Over 40 known	Un- known	Total
	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40	known	Un- known			
Measles	1	8	6	2	10	17	9	5	4	—	—	—	2	—	—	64		
Whooping Cough	3	4	5	6	10	7	6	12	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	56		
Scarlet Fever	—	1	1	—	—	2	2	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	9		
Pneumonia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	2		
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	4		
Dysentery	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	1	5	—	9		
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	2		
Diphtheria	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	5		
Food Poisoning	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1		
Cerebro Spinal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1		

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The state of immunisation of the child population of the district at the end of 1944 is indicated in the table below :—

Under 5 years of age		Between 5 and 15 years of age	
Number	Percentage of group	Number	Percentage of group
145	31.1%	553	50.6%

Though the numbers of children is much lower than was to have been expected from the considerable efforts which have been made to persuade parents to have their children treated, the percentages attained approximate to and in some instances are higher than those reached in other parts of the country. The lack of interest at present shown by many parents exemplifies a well-recognised social phenomenon which is also reflected in the low proportion of children vaccinated against Small Pox and in the small take-up of the Ministry of Food Vitamin preparations for infants. Following the rush to have children protected when the Campaign for Diphtheria Immunisation was inaugurated in 1941 there has been a continuing lack of response by parents who did not then accept treatment, even though the efficiency of our publicity methods has been stepped up by the co-operation of the District Nurse Health Visitors and School Medical Officers; and by the distribution of new leaflets and

pre-paid acceptance cards to all homes where there are children under the age of 15 years.

By arrangement with the County Education Committee special immunisation sessions are held at the nearest school whenever completed acceptance forms for five or more children (of school or pre-school age) are received. When the number of acceptances is less than 5 they are retained until more are received, or if the parents wish immediate action to be taken they are directed to the Child Welfare Clinic.

Immunisation material is issued from the Leominster Office free of charge to doctors for the treatment of children in their practices. It should be noted that private doctors, some of whom do a lot of immunisation in their practices, do not make a return to the Public Health Office on the number of children treated by them. These children therefore could not be included in the figures set out above.

TUBERCULOSIS.

At the end of 1944 the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of 19 males and 17 females who normally reside within the Borough.

During the year twelve new cases were notified, seven on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and five because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs. During the same period, one death from Tuberculosis occurred.

CASES ON THE TUBERCULOSIS REGISTER.

Year.	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Total.
1939	6	...	6	...	12
1940	9	...	9	...	18
1941	11	...	13	...	24
1943	14	...	14	...	28
1942	13	...	14	...	28
1944	20	...	16	...	36

SCABIES.

A marked decline in the occurrence of Scabies among school children which had been noted during 1943 has continued. The few cases which still arise receive domiciliary treatment under the supervision of the family doctor.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

The Venereal Diseases Treatment Service is administered by the County Council. In view of the increasing importance of this problem and of the interest taken in it by all who have the welfare of the community at heart it is of some significance to record that in 1944 twelve civilians (of whom 8 were males) from the Borough, commenced treatment at the V.D. Clinic, Hereford. The corresponding figure for 1943 was six.

CAUSES OF DEATH (all ages).

DISEASE.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	0	1	1
Influenza	2	1	3
Cancer (all forms)	5	9	14
Diseases of Heart and Arteries	12	15	27
Bronchitis	0	1	1
Pneumonia	2	2	4
Appendicitis and Digestive Diseases	3	0	3
Nephritis	4	5	9
Death by Violence (including Road Traffic)	2	0	2
All other causes	4	3	7
TOTAL	34	37	71